

ADVENTURES IN READING WITH

Nature  
CAT

LET'S SAVE

THE MARSH!



PBS  
LearningMedia



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# MARSH ECOSYSTEMS

Nature Cat and his friends find a marsh that's in trouble!

**Pollution** was forcing animals from their home. Cleaning the pollution helps **conserve** the marsh. Why are marshes so important?

Marshes are wetlands, or areas that connect land and water. They help **filter** the water that flows through them. They store water and even soak it up when there's a flood.

Wetlands are special **ecosystems** made up of many living things. Marsh habitats are home to plants such as long grasses and cattails. They're also home to animals from herons and eagles to turtles and frogs. The wet marsh is their **habitat**.

## CONSERVING MARSHES

Daisy wants to learn more about the problems facing marshes. She learns that marshes can have both fresh water and salt water and they can be big or small. Freshwater marshes are found along ponds, rivers, and lands. Saltwater marshes are found along the coasts of oceans. They can also suffer from pollution, especially when they're near cities. If a part of a marsh becomes polluted soon the whole marsh will become polluted. When one part of the ecosystem suffers, the whole ecosystem suffers.



## A MARSH WITH A VIEW

Nature Cat took a look under the marsh's surface. He saw lots of different living things under the water. Marsh water is home to many bugs and their larvae, or baby bugs. Many fish live in marshes, and some go to marshes to have their babies.

The muck that makes up the marsh is soft soil that has many nutrients. It's made of soil, animal waste, and dead plants that break down slowly over time. Tiny living things, such as bugs and bacteria, live in it and eat it.

Would you like to take a look into a marsh?

Make your own pond viewer to help you see underwater [here](#).



The trash pollution in the marsh made the water rise and changed the habitat.



# HELP HAL OUT!



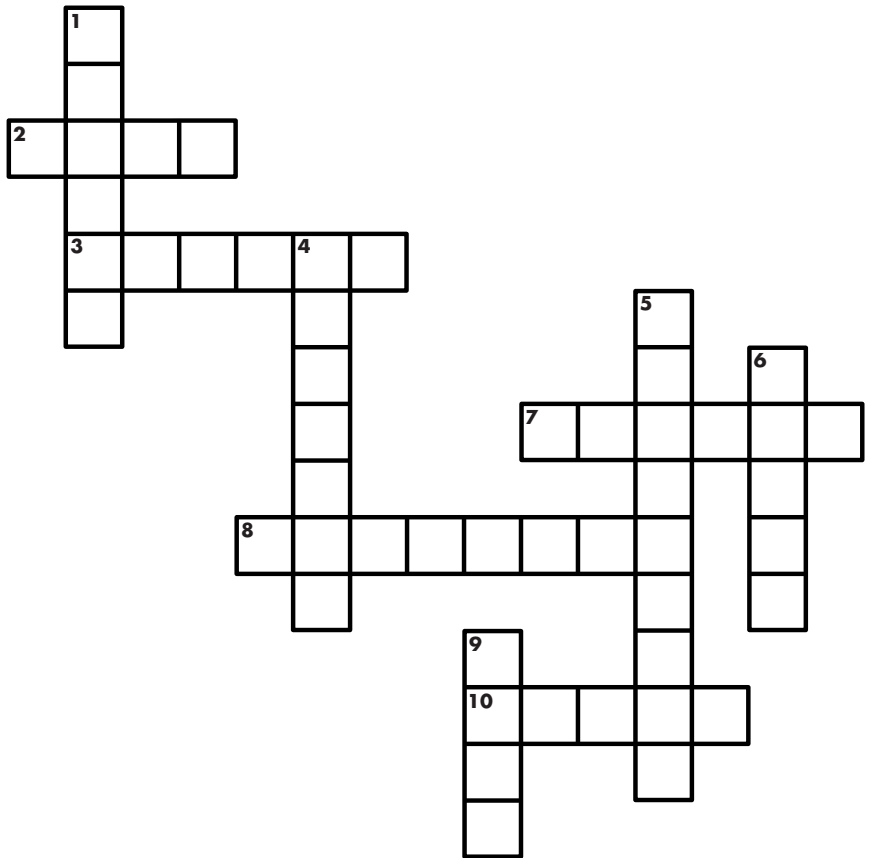
Help! Hal's lost in the marsh. He meets a bunch of marsh creatures who try to help him find his friends. Which creatures did Hal meet? Complete the crossword puzzle to find out.

## Across

- 2. an amphibian that has wet, smooth skin and strong legs for leaping
- 3. a reptile with four legs and a long body and tail
- 7. a mammal with a furry body and flat tail that builds dams
- 8. a flying insect that bites people and animals
- 10. a large bird that is a U.S. national symbol

## Down

- 1. a reptile with a hard shell
- 4. a mammal with gray fur on its body, a black furry mask on its face and a bushy, ringed tail
- 5. a large flying insect with a long, thin body and four wings
- 6. a large bird that has long legs and a long neck
- 9. a mammal with long, thin legs and hoofs. Males grow antlers on their head.



## GLOSSARY

**conserve:** To keep something safe from being destroyed or harmed.

**ecosystem:** A community of living things in a certain environment and the connections between them.

**filter:** To remove unwanted matter from something.

**habitat:** The natural place where something lives.

**nutrient:** Something a living thing needs to stay alive and grow.

**pollution:** Something that is harmful to nature.